

Fire Recovery... a natural progression

regrowth

A newsletter by Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment on public land fire recovery



AUGUST 2010

Over 287,000 hectares of Victoria's public land was burnt in the February 2009 bushfires, including almost 100,000 hectares of national and state parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria and nearly 170,000 hectares of state forests and reserves managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The most severely affected parks were Kinglake National Park, Wilsons Promontory National Park, Bunyip State Park, Cathedral Range State Park and Yarra Ranges National Park. The fires devastated the Ash Forests through the Central Highlands.

Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment have been working closely with the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRRA) to rebuild and reopen areas, and protect our natural and cultural values.

This newsletter provides an update on recent fire recovery works completed in the last two months and outlines what still needs to be done. If you missed the special twelve months report edition issued in April 2010 or the previous June issue, then you can access these at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/fire or www.dse.vic.gov.au



Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report

The Final Report from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission is now available at www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au. The report is also available in either electronic (DVD) or hard copy format from the Victorian Government, through Information Victoria. You can order copies of the report from Victoria Online (www.vic.gov.au) or by phoning 1800 463 684.

Inside this issue:

- Winter Wonderland at Lake Mountain
 - Fire Awareness Awards
 - Steel Funding Recovery
 - Watsons Creek Biolink Project
 - Honouring our History
- ... plus an update on fire-affected parks and reserves

Winter Wonderland at Lake Mountain

A new snow making machine is creating a winter wonderland at the Lake Mountain Alpine Resort to increase snow play for visitors and boost tourism.

The Victorian Premier, John Brumby, turned on the new machine over the June school holidays just in time for the influx of visitors to the resort. Now, more man-made snow can be produced at the resort than ever before.

Around \$9.2 million will be invested in new projects to rebuild key winter tourism infrastructure and to develop new summer tourist experiences at the resort.



Premier John Brumby at Lake Mountain with Peter Watkinson, Executive Director, Public Land, DSE.

Fire Awareness Awards

For almost twenty years these annual awards have provided the only forum to publicly thank fire agencies, organisations, individuals, schools and community members for the great work they do in keeping Victorians safe from bushfire and fires in the home.

Fire Recovery is a major theme for this year's awards and a special category has been created to encourage entries related to the incredible work being done to breathe new life into bushfire affected communities.

If you would like assistance with submitting your project into this year's Fire Awareness Awards, your local DSE or Parks Victoria contact will be able to help or phone the Fire Awareness Awards event manager on (03) 9412 4465.



**Ordinary People.
Extraordinary
Achievements.**

Entries now open

The Fire Awareness Awards recognise the hard work of individuals, groups and organisations involved in fire projects in Victoria.

Enter now for awards across 15 categories for completed projects.

Or turn a great idea into reality by applying to receive up to \$10,000 for an RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant, or apply for a special incentive grant of up to \$2,000

To enter or find out more, visit
www.fireawarenessawards.com.au



Proudly sponsored by  Supported by  

Steel Funding Recovery

More than 11,650 tons of recycled steel has raised approximately \$1.5 million worth of grant funding for community groups to undertake fire recovery projects up to the value of \$5000. The first round of grants money was raised from recycling scrap metal cleared from properties post 2009 bushfires.

The successful first round grant recipients are:

- The Friends of Marysville Walks (\$5000) to complete Holly control works within the Marysville Triangle,
- South West Goulburn Landcare Network (\$5000) to purchase a trailer to carry a weed control spray unit,
- South West Goulburn Landcare Network (\$4500) to conduct a native seed project,
- Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare Group (\$2500) to conduct riparian bushland restoration work on Dry Creek,
- Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare Group (\$5000) for the Rejuvenation of Sustainable Landscapes Trail project,

- Sunday Creek Dry Creek Landcare Group (\$5000) for works to recover the Wandong Primary School garden,
- Wandong – Heathcote Junction Community Group (\$5000) for vegetation enhancement works,
- Upper Merri Plenty Landcare Group (\$5000) for restoration works on the Upper Plenty Community Recreational Area.

Short-listed applicants for grants exceeding \$5000 will be notified of the next assessment phase in the coming months.

Green Corps Recovery Efforts

Three Green Corps volunteer crews from the **Australian Conservation Volunteers** teamed up with Parks Victoria to undertake recovery activities in fire-affected parks. The team based at **Kinglake National Park** installed silt traps and other erosion control measures, collected eucalypt seed and installed nest boxes for native birds, small possums and gliders. The **Wilson's Promontory National Park** team measured and recorded post-fire recovery of flora and fauna and completed major erosion control and track repair work. The **Bunyip State Park** team assisted with supplementary feeding of Helmeted Honeyeaters and undertook walking track recovery and erosion control in creek lines.



Spectacular Species Sighted

A number of species have been sighted and recorded in the fire-affected area of Bunyip State Park - the **White-browed Woodswallow**, **Masked Woodswallow** and **Rufous Songlark**, **Pallid Cuckoo** and **Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo** all of which are considered to be dry or open country birds. The **Painted Button-quail** and **Grey Fantails** are a few of the more common birds that are regularly seen in the park.



Watsons Creek Biolink Project

The first stage of a significant fire recovery initiative at Watsons Creek is complete with over eighty hectares of former farmland revegetated into a healthy habitat for native fauna.

In an effort involving more than 1,000 volunteer hours, over 4000 trees have been planted at the Watsons Creek site to create a biological link between Kinglake National Park and the unburnt Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve. This link aims to provide a corridor of continuous vegetation to allow animals such as the **Brush Tailed Phascogale** and **Common Dunnart** to re-inhabit Kinglake National Park. Watsons Creek can be found just off Marshalls Road, 10.3 kilometres from the township of St Andrews and 61 kilometres from the centre of Melbourne. The site is slightly sloped and just a short walk from the car park.

Volunteer Registration

Registrations are still open for individuals and groups wishing to participate in the next stage of the project. Children under the age of sixteen are required to be supervised by a parent or guardian.

If you would like to be involved in this project contact: Tara Sanders 03 5772 0290, Mobile 0437 705 432, email tsanders@parks.vic.gov.au

Honouring our History

Archaeologists have completed post-fire assessments of **Wilson's Promontory National Park**, **Walhalla Historic Area** and the **Steels Creek** mining area in **Kinglake National Park**. The findings have been submitted to Heritage Victoria for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register.

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the Lawson Falls Picnic Ground at **Bunyip State Park** has been approved by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. The plan was a necessary step in the reconstruction of Lawsons Falls to a new and improved design needed to meet future demands. The new facilities will be constructed over spring.



Base of glass jar found along Forest Road in Bunyip



Paul Kitchell and Angela Skehan planting for the Watsons Creek Biolink project

Kinglake National Park

Over 22,110 hectares (96 per cent) of the park was burnt in the Kilmore- Murrindindi fire.

Lyrebirds still call Kinglake home



Superb Lyrebird at home in Kinglake NP

One of the most renowned of all Australian birds for its remarkable mimicry and splendid dancing displays is the Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*). A recent survey has confirmed the lyrebird is still at home in Kinglake National Park.

Parks Victoria staff joined the Friends of the Lyrebirds, Friends of Kinglake National Park and many other enthusiastic volunteers to undertake the annual lyrebird survey in July 2010 to monitor behaviour, distribution and population trends throughout the park.

Male lyrebirds call during winter to potential mates. At 7am their calls were heard at all survey sites. The survey was conducted at Masons Falls, Wombelano Falls and Watsons Creek Track. Three lyrebirds were sighted at each site and one volunteer was lucky enough to witness a male lyrebird in full display.



Volunteers gather for the annual Lyrebird Survey at Kinglake NP

The July 2011 survey will mark the 25th anniversary of the start of the monitoring program. If you are interested in participating contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963.

Master Plan update

Following extensive on site analysis and community consultation over the past seven months, a draft master plan for Kinglake National Park was released for public comment in June 2010. The plan recognised the need to improve access between the four separate park "blocks" and to make better connections with nearby town communities.

The draft Master Plan was available on the web, and displayed from June to July 2010 at the Kinglake, Whittlesea and Yarra Glen libraries. Parks Victoria staff took the plan to the Kinglake community market and the Farmers Market in June 2010.

Local residents and visitors have provided feedback and comments on the various actions proposed in the draft plan including:

- a new downhill mountain bike track under the powerlines at Bowden Spur
- a new lookout structure at Mount Sugarloaf
- better linking tracks between the township and the national park
- a new layout for the picnic area at Masons Falls
- more accessible walking tracks at key locations including Jehosaphat Gully
- a new camping area to complement "The Gums" camping area

A summary of the Strategic Directions and the full eight page "**Strategic Directions for Sustainable Visitation**", along with a summary of the draft Master Plan can be found at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/Kinglake.

The plan will now be finalised using all of the information and comment provided. It should be finalised in October 2010.

If you would like to be kept informed of the progress of the Master Plan, please contact Andrew Shannon at Parks Victoria ashannon@parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 19 63.



Kinglake Farmers Market

Murrindindi Scenic Reserve

Students, teachers and parents from the Toolangi Primary School got down to earth with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) replanting part of the **Murrindindi Scenic Reserve**.

One thousand native seedlings were planted to revegetate the **Cassinia Camping Area** which was devastated by the Black Saturday bushfires.

Students learnt about post fire regeneration and revegetation while planting a mix of trees, shrubs and groundcovers to beautify the area and add to the natural regeneration of the forest.

The seedlings planted were grown from seed collected in the Toolangi State Forest and plants were provided as part of a special partnership between the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre and the Melbourne Museum.

The revegetation of the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve is part of a larger \$2.5 million project which will see the restoration and reconstruction of camping facilities, including picnic shelters, barbeques, camping areas, toilet blocks, carparks, walking tracks and reserve roads which were destroyed in the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.



Mount Disappointment State Forest

Major reconstruction works to restore recreational sites at **Mount Disappointment State Forest** near Broadford have commenced.

The \$1 million project will see the construction of campsites and visitor facilities at Number One Camp, Regular Camp, Blairs Hut, Strath Falls and Andersons Gardens.

The project also includes the reinstatement of the Sunday Creek and Strath Falls walking tracks and construction of three new footbridges.

Some areas within the Mount Disappointment State Forest remain closed to the public because of the impact of the fire and DSE's winter road closure program.

The project will be undertaken in stages with final works expected to be completed by December 2011.



Cathedral Range State Park

Over 3,200 hectares (92 per cent) of the park was burn in the Kilmore-Murrindindi fire.

Most of the walking tracks in the park have been repaired and are now open. Hikers and climbers are requested to carry contour maps with them as signage is progressively being replaced.

Neds Gully, Cooks Mill and Jawbone carparks are open. Sugarloaf Saddle carpark is also open and work to rebuild the visitor facilities will start in spring. The day visitor area is expected to open in late 2010.

Visitors also have the opportunity to camp at Neds Gully or at Cooks Mill, and the Farmyard has a smaller camping area available. Bookings can be made online at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au



Magical Marysville

Marysville is a truly wonderful little town, blessed by natural attractions on all sides.

A community review of walking trails on public land around Marysville, post Black Saturday fires, has led to the development of a draft plan detailing proposed new trails. The trails are intended to create better connections between the most popular natural attractions that surround the town.

Once the community's views have been incorporated into the network of walking trails, a final plan will be produced in August 2010 and \$250,000 worth of work will be undertaken over spring.

The plan is currently on display at the Marysville Information Centre and the Department of Sustainability and Environment Marysville office.

This walking trail review is separate to VBRR's **'Five Towns Trail Project'** which is focused on a possible network of shared trails connecting each of the towns in "the Triangle" - Marysville, Narbethong, Taggerty, Granton and Buxton.

Recommendations for walking trails based on a recently completed feasibility study and community comment are currently available for public comment.

Go to www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au for more information.

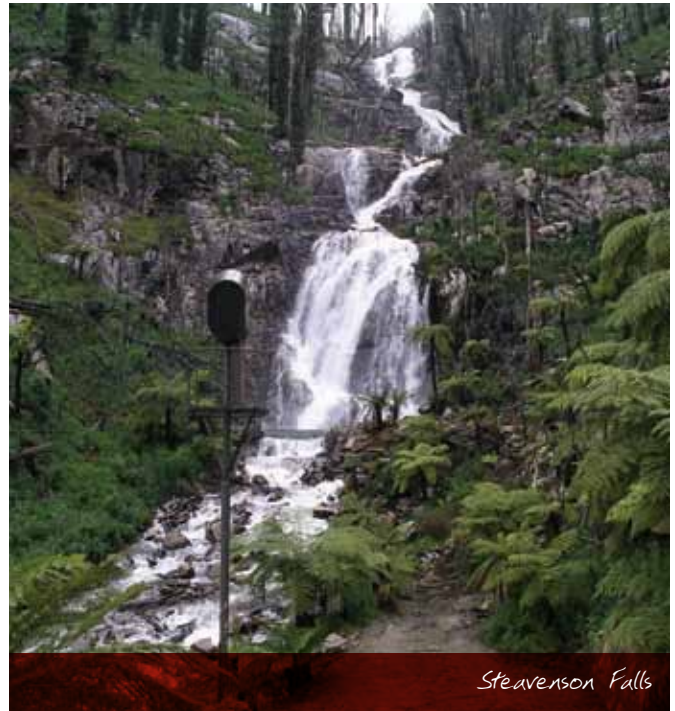
Steavenson Falls

Victoria's highest waterfall will soon be accessible to all once again. Road works may not always represent a major milestone in a project's life, but when it comes to the renowned Steavenson Falls, to locals, this small step will make a big difference.

Sealing of the road into the falls has been completed making it more weather-proof and allowing works at the site to be carried out over the winter months.

Although the road into the falls is not yet open to the public, drainage and car park works have been completed. Works on a new viewing platform at the base of the falls as well as installation of the electrical distribution cabling throughout the reserve have commenced.

Completion of the work, due at the end of August 2010, will mark the end of Stage 1 of the \$2.8 million Steavenson Falls reconstruction project



Steavenson Falls

Seasonal Road Closures

A reminder that during the winter months, DSE and Parks Victoria close several public roads in forests and national parks. Despite many roads being re-opened following post fire rehabilitation works, some have now been closed as part of the normal seasonal closure program.

Information on seasonal road closures can be found at www.dse.vic.gov.au or www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

The fire recovery program on Victoria's land is a partnership between the State and Commonwealth Governments. Recovery is co-ordinated by the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority (VBRR). The program is being delivered by Parks Victoria (parks and reserves) and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (state forests and other public land). The work is funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth government's 'Rebuilding Together' – Statewide Bushfire Recovery plan. Additional funding has been provided by the Commonwealth Government's Caring for our Country program through individual Catchment Management Authorities.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

regrowth

If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter go to www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/fire

General disclaimer: This document may be of assistance to you, but Parks Victoria and DSE and their employees do not guarantee that the information it contains is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this document.

For information regarding national and state parks contact:

Parks Victoria

Telephone 13 1963 www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

For information regarding fire management on public land, catchments and water management, biodiversity, state forests and crown land reserves contact:

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

Telephone 136 186 www.dse.vic.gov.au

This newsletter is published on

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au and www.dse.vic.gov.au



Healthy Parks
Healthy People

